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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Savior, our help in ages past, take our lawmakers to a safe refuge, for You are their strong defense. Let them find safety under Your wings, as You protect them with Your constant love and faithfulness. Today, refresh our Senators with Your spirit, quicken their thinking, reinforce their judgment, and strengthen their resolve to follow You. Show them what needs to be changed and give them the courage and wisdom to make the changes.

Lord, we conclude this prayer by asking You to embrace with Your arms of mercy the victims and the families affected by the tragic shooting in Aurora, CO. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 23, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUT ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 467.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 467, S. 3412, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief to middle-class families.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now observe a moment of silence for the victims of the shooting in Colorado.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(Moment of Silence.)

AURORA, COLORADO SHOOTINGS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate pauses to remember those killed in last week's horrific shooting in Colorado.

Among the dead was 26-year-old Jonathan Blunk—a graduate of Hug High School in Reno, NV, a Navy veteran and father of two. My heart goes out to his loved ones and to all the victims and their families as they struggle to make sense of the senseless. How can you make sense of something that is so senseless? We may never know the motivations behind this terrible crime or

understand why anyone would target so many innocent people.

Friday's events were a reminder that nothing in this world is certain and that life is precious and short. Today we pause to mourn the dead but also to honor how they lived. We pledge our support to the people of Aurora, CO, both as they grieve and as they begin to heal from this terrible tragedy.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

AURORA, COLORADO SHOOTINGS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have all been sifting through the events of last Friday, and I think it is entirely appropriate for the Senate to take a moment today to acknowledge, as we just did, the victims of this nightmarish rampage, their families, and the wider community of Aurora.

In the life of a nation, some events are just so terrible they compel all of us to set aside our normal routines and preoccupations, step back, reflect on our own motivations and priorities, and think about the kind of lives we all aspire to live. This is certainly one of those times.

As is almost always the case in moments such as this, the horror has been tempered somewhat by the acts of heroism and self-sacrifice that took place in the midst of the violence. I read one report that said three different young men sacrificed their own lives in protecting the young women they were with. We know the first responders and nurses and doctors saved lives too, including the life of an unborn child.

I think all of us were moved over the weekend by the stories we have heard about the victims themselves. It is hard not to be struck by how young most of them were, of how many dreams were extinguished so quickly and mercilessly, but we were also moved by the outpouring of compassion that followed and by the refusal of the people of Aurora to allow the monster who committed this crime to

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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